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Cap 2

HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

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U. S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF INFORMATION

(Release on receipt)

SUBJECT: "Buttons from Tagua Nuts"--Information from the Office of Foreign
Agricultural Relations, U.S. Department of Agriculture

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You may have known them as ivory nut buttons....or buttons made from vegetable ivory. Before the war you saw them often...on coats and dresses. Pretty colored buttons that held their color.

They were made from tagua (tah gwa) nuts. And they came from Latin America. Tagua palms are found in many densely forested regions on the Pacific coastal plains of Ecuador and in other tropical parts of Central and South America.

The nuts grow in a cluster of burs something like a chestnut bur except these are much larger. A cluster of tagua nut burs may weigh more than 30 pounds. Each section has from four to six nuts in it. And the nut is nearly as large as a hen's egg.

Before the war....this country imported more than six thousand tons of tagua nuts a year from Ecuador. Most of these were used to make buttons.

During the war...when we didn't have the shipping space to import tagua nuts...manufacturers in this country developed synthetic substitutes for tagu buttons.

Now that there's more cargo space in the ships plying between Latin America and this country---experts in the Office of Foreign Agricultural Relations say it's likely you'll be seeing more buttons made from tagua nuts. However...from now on...tagua buttons will be competing with buttons made from synthetics for your favor.

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